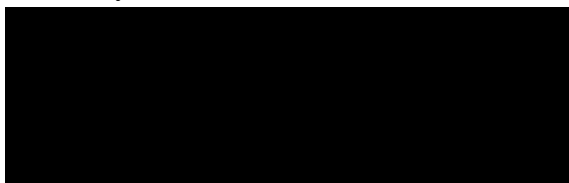


14th March 2019

Garry Reed



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Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
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Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Dear Committee Secretary and Members, please see my submission below for this Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry.

My family has lived on an agricultural and grazing property in the Bowen River and Burdekin River Catchments for almost 100 years.

My father was deeply concerned about the landuse that contributed to so much loss of local biodiversity and landscape function leading to large amounts of soil running past our property in Pelican and Coral Creeks out to the Coral Sea and onto the Great Barrier Reef.

I understand that attempts have been made over some time now to improve landuse practices to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff with some success.

The *Landholders Driving Change* Major Integrated Project underway in the Broken, Bowen and Bogie River Catchments offers great potential for improvements in landuse yet also has risks of unforeseen consequences from some projects that could do more harm than good.

There are many examples of poor governance and regulatory failure in the Collinsville area. I had a letter published in the *Bowen Independent* on Wednesday 13.3.19 that starkly illustrates chronic failure of processes: **Community Trust Lost**

The following material was presented to the Collinsville community by Sonoma Mine Management in 2011. The excerpts are from: Report for Coral Creek Diversion - Supplementary Information - Report for Public Consultation - December 2010.

(Excerpts begin) Bank stability will be achieved through the early establishment of vegetation to minimise the risk of scour and associated loss of topsoil and planted vegetation.

Rehabilitation works will be completed during and immediately after construction and before the diversion is opened to flow events. Rehabilitation will also include the formation of riffle zones using rocks and gravel to slow the flow of water through the diversion. Erosion and sediment control initiatives will also be implemented to reduce the amount of sediment laden run off entering the Creek

The proposed Creek Diversion is unlikely to have any significant long term impacts due to the rehabilitation measures proposed to reinstate the riparian habitat after the diversion construction and the proposed offsets to achieve a net conservation gain (That is, more trees will be established as part of the rehabilitation than are removed).

Coral Creek provides the widest range of microhabitat (i.e. large trees, tree hollows, fallen logs, decorticated bark, shrubs and litter) in the Sonoma Mine area and immediate surrounds. The cleared areas of the Mine have the least microhabitat diversity due to the lack of trees and associated microhabitat.

The riparian zone along Coral Creek is good habitat for possums and gliders providing hollows, high level of vegetation cover, seasonally available nectar resources and tree species with high concentrations of nutrients in the leaves and linkages to adjoining patches of other woodlands. Although possums and gliders were not recorded, the riparian vegetation is good habitat for these species and there is a strong possibility that possums and gliders are present.

The proposed diversion of a 1250 m reach of Coral Creek is unlikely to have a significant long term impact on matters of species of conservation significance largely due to the mitigation measures proposed to reinstate the riparian habitat after diversion of the creek has been undertaken and the proposed offset to achieve a net conservation gain.

Black Ironbox - *Eucalyptus raveretiana* trees take more than 150 years to form hollows. This timeframe means replacement of hollows during rehabilitation can only occur through the installation of nest-boxes onto regrowth trees, which is an expensive process and can only be done when the trees reach a reasonable size (approximately 20 years old). To address this, hollow-bearing trees will be retained where possible or relocated where removal cannot be avoided for the diversion channel. (excerpts end)

All of these promises have been broken – all trees have been burned - the 500 Black Ironbox trees that were planted as Biodiversity Offsets and died have been downgraded by the Federal Environment Minister to natural regeneration which is even less likely to succeed.

The Squirrel Gliders that are known to have been in Coral Creek now have no way to migrate without trees. Sonoma Mine Management has delivered a major net conservation loss. Is it any wonder that coal mining has lost the trust of the community? (end of letter)

I support this Bill for stronger regulations to prevent sediment pollution from all sources including mining operations and waterway diversions.



Coral Creek – Sonoma mine – Collinsville Aerodrome – 19th February 2019

It is obvious at this point in Australia's history after the *Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry*, the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*, and the breaking of the promises to the Collinsville community by *QCoal* to protect Coral Creek, and the admission by *Glencore* that it used public relations misinformation campaigns on social media against renewable energy, that most industries and groups are liable to act ruthlessly in their self-interest if allowed to.

It is also very obvious that *conflict of interest* and *imbalance in power* in the assessment process by consultants that are paid 100% by proponents is fundamentally flawed and leading to disastrously bad decisions and great loss of cultural, social, historical and natural capital and ecosystem services. The development of assessment systems that keep the government and proponents at arm's length from consultants is an imperative.

The other fundamental requirement for ecologically and economically sustainable development is holistic analysis that considers all the costs and benefits in the short and long terms – the present narrow neo-classical economic paradigm has led to environmental degradation and ecosystem collapse over much of the world.

Close to home I often see technological determinism and financial incentivisation distorting landuse practices to the detriment of biodiversity and landscape functionality. I noticed today that an excavator had been used in a creek to remove a small Chinee Apple tree that could have been cut with a handsaw and a small amount of herbicide applied, saving the mobilisation of several cubic metres of soil.



Oliver - Menton Bridge - Pelican Creek Collinsville – 14th March 2019

There is the potential for more employment and voluntourism from careful weed control that preserves biodiversity rather than the use of expensive heavy machinery that often spread weeds and disturbs soil and roots of other desirable trees and plants. Also the use of large amounts of herbicide can be dramatically reduced by two person teams working to cut stump and apply herbicide – if a full cost accounting of the downstream impacts of the herbicide and biodiversity are considered the equation becomes more cost effective.

The need to internalize the presently externalized costs in all areas of activity is recognized by scientists and economists around the world as a foundation of sustainable development and the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

There is no doubt that we face great challenges to improve landuse and rehabilitate landscapes degraded over a century or more, to reduce the elevated runoff in the order of 1000%. The risks of new practices or changes of scale of practices could have very serious consequences if they exacerbate an already serious problem. A fundamental prerequisite for the security of reliable developments in sustainable landuse must be rigorous science and independent assessment and appraisal, and adequate resources to achieve the goals.

I hope my contribution has been helpful. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to participate in this inquiry into this vital issue.

Yours sincerely, Garry Reed